

MECHANICS' INSTITUTES AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS.

One of the most prominent defects in the debates of Mechanics' Institutes in the present day is the parrot-like imitation, in both subject and argument, of older institutions of similar character. It may be very necessary to know whether the Duke of Wellington was a greater general than Napoleon—whether astronomy has been productive of greater benefits than geography—or whether monarchical government is better adapted to the human family than republicanism—but unfortunately we have all heard these things discussed from our boyhood. There is no more benefit to be derived from such debates, if hackneyed arguments can merit the appellation, than there is in a recitation of a child's primer. If Mechanics' Institutes are to be of any use they must approach the practical—they must abandon the old worn-out arguments of worn-out subjects and take up the living questions of the day, where there is some possibility of obtaining originality of thought. The Victoria Mechanics' Institute has been heretofore too much wedded to the imitative faculty to be of much service to its members or the public; but the last debate affords us hope of an agreeable change. When we see a question which is agitating the public mind made the subject of a general controversy we are induced to think that the usefulness of the Institute is very much increased. The late discussion on Union and Free-port did not bring out anything absolutely new, but it has nevertheless produced a beneficial effect—by attracting much more attention to the subject. It is better to hear even a foolish man talk than to be in perpetual silence; for the veriest babbling man at some time or other suggest to the minds of his auditory an idea worth considering. We have said there was nothing absolutely new brought out in the discussion; but by this we do not mean to imply a total absence of novelties in the controversy, but rather that there was no legitimate point made either pro or con, that has not been already produced. It is very true we had the rather extraordinary statement adduced that the ability of the people of Vancouver Island and British Columbia was not sufficiently up to the mark to govern the two colonies when united—but this showed not so much a reason against union on the part of the speaker as a firm belief in the doctrine of heaven-born statesmen and kings by right divine. We have always labored under the almost universal idea, but now unfortunately a delusion, that there never yet was an English speaking population, great or small, who did not know how to govern itself; after the well-weighted assertion, however, of the gentleman who opened the discussion on Thursday evening we shall give up our confidence in the Anglo-Saxon race, and wish for the good old days when men's heads and pockets were in the holy keeping of the ruler of the land.

The most practical remarks made in the discussion were those of Mr. Garrett, who has confirmed by a recent tour in British Columbia what we have maintained from the outset,—that beyond New Westminster the great cry is for union of the colonies. Every day is bound to make that cry more potent, and bring the great question to a speedier issue. What is desirable and what is wanting is unanimity of sentiment in Vancouver Island. "In things essential harmony." Let our merchants once and forever throw overboard their storm attracting Jonah; let them banish the free port from their minds, and all will yet be well. To talk of Legislative union with British Columbia, and an absence of duties on Vancouver Island is to talk of amalgamating oil and water. The thing is so absurd that we are astonished that reasonable men could be found to advocate it even for a moment. Had it been possible to unite the two colonies under these diverse systems of taxation, the thing would have been done long ago. It was the Free-port, and it alone, that always stood as a stumbling-block in the way. If, however, we are inclined to doubt the wisdom of the men who fancy that the Free-port can be retained with union, how much more to be questioned is the reason of those who would attempt to balance the advantages we derive from the Free-port with those we would derive from union. "Our exports of imported goods," we said in an article in January last, "amount to the insignificant figure of \$307,343. When it is considered that Puget Sound, with the enormously high United States tariff, exports to us of its own produce nearly as large an amount—\$279,870—our commercial pretensions are indeed pitiful. It is to British Columbia—to our domestic connexions and them alone—that we are indebted for customers for our imports." Such was our language then, and it is the same now. British Columbia is our great customer; let her trade be swept from us and Victoria as a commercial port might wind up her business. Take away, on the other hand, the petty export trade to California and elsewhere, and how many men in the community would be affected by the circumstance? Yet the men

who talk of Free-port against Union are virtually putting this \$300,000 against the British Columbian \$1,500,000. They are even more foolish; for while there is nothing to show why our exports to California should, under a uniform tariff with British Columbia decrease, there is everything to show that if union be not immediately consummated our British Columbia trade will be in spite of all the Free-port policy in the world taken from us. There is but one policy, and merchant as well as mechanic must accept it, and that is union and a uniform tariff. Any continued separation, or any such hybrid union as the free port party have begun to talk about, would be ruinous if one or other could be carried out. As union, however, is bound to come, and as the free port is bound to go, it is simply buying at the moon to attempt seriously to oppose the inevitable.

THE COMING ELECTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BRITISH COLONIST. Sir,—In this morning's Chronicle I noticed a letter signed "One Interested," in reference to the election for Metcheson District, which asserts that Dr. Ash is not supported by the Hudson Bay Company. As not only the "Speaker" but a late high-official member of the Company has been canvassing for the doctor for the last two or three days, the correspondent of the Chronicle must be in error. Notwithstanding the powerful influence brought to bear, I have little doubt but that the electors will see it to their interest to return Mr. Elliott by a large majority. It is moreover quite palpable to the most casual observer that the communication referred to has a Hudson Bay odor about it intended to deceive the voters by making the candidate sail under false colors.

FAIRPLAY.

THE STEAM-FISH.—The trial of the last experiment in shipbuilding may be looked for in a few weeks. Mr. Wynan's steam yacht, commonly known as the "Cigar Ship," is now nearly ready for launching, and a very high rate of speed is anticipated. Her construction is certainly strange, even in these days of audacious innovation. She is 256 feet long, and her section amidships is a perfect circle 16 feet in diameter, from which she tapers away fore and aft to two fine points. The engines are of great power, no less than eight indicated horse-power to every ton burden, and the screws, one at each end, are four feet greater in diameter than the greatest breadth of the vessel. At each point a length of 16 feet revolves with the screw. The exterior surface is constructed with the greatest possible smoothness, so as to prevent the minimum of resistance by friction, all the rivets being countersunk. Hull, engines, funnels, boilers and screws are all constructed on entirely new principles, and there seems a real prospect of her attaining a speed more worthy of the age than the miserable 15 miles an hour, which is the greatest pace of our quickest sea-going steamers. The comfort of human beings on board is another question altogether. It is feared by many that the small deck fixed on the top of the cylinder will be washed by the waves from end to end.—Eng. Paper.

CANONICAL REFORM.—The Twenty-ninth Canon is to be altered. Convocation was ordered to change it so as to allow the parents to be godfathers and godmothers, and did so, but added that no applicant was to be admitted unless "capable of receiving the Communion." The old words were "unless they have received" the Communion, and the change enabled the clergyman to put all manner of questions. The canon as amended was therefore disallowed, but Convocation remodelled it according to instructions, and it is now before the law officers of the Crown. While the Bishops were about it they might have lightened the subscriptions imposed upon parents who stand as godfathers or godmothers. A man may be quite determined to bring up his child as a member of the Church of England, and yet unable to say that he "steadfastly believes" every one of a number of theological propositions.—Spectator.

NO PORT OF ENTRY.—Mr. Robinson, Superintendent of the Queen Charlotte Coal Co.'s works, desires us to state that the announcement copied by the Chronicle from the Evening Post, that a Port of Entry had been established at Skidegate Bay, Queen Charlotte Island, to obviate the necessity of vessels having to proceed to New Westminster to clear, and that Mr. Robinson had been appointed Collector of the Port, is altogether a fabrication. Our contemporary was as badly sold as he was in reference to the erection of fortified works to resist the dreaded invasion of a handful of Siwash. Mr. Robinson's authority directs him on the contrary to perform the duties of a revenue officer, and to prevent any goods from being landed on the Island that have not paid duty at New Westminster.

VICTORIA ARM.—The pleasures of this delightful retreat are year by year more appreciated by our citizens. Probably next year, when the Rowing Club is in active operation, there will be quite a mania for aquatic sports and flotillas of boats will be seen wending their way after business hours up to the romantic "gorge." To add to the natural attractions of the spot we observe that Mr. Beecroft has erected, immediately above the "gorge" a neat and substantial house of refreshment, which is to be opened in the course of two or three weeks. During the winter it is the intention of the spirited proprietor to lay out the grounds as tea gardens, in the old country style, and when spring returns picnic and pleasure parties will, no doubt, make this their place of call.

ELECTION CONUNDRUM.—A wag asks us "why will Dr. Ash not be returned for Metcheson?" Ans.—Because the electors won't have the Free-port Doctor-in (doctrine).

EASTERN ITEMS.

[From N. Y. Corr. of Bulletin].

MECHEN.

Adah Isaacs Menken arrived here last week in the Liverpool steamer, and will shortly appear at one of our theatres. With the prestige of her extraordinary European successes, added to the threatened rivalry of Leo Hunter, Adah is expected to prove a great card to whatever manager is lucky enough to secure her services. Her last success in London was achieved in the nautical drama of Black-eyed Susan, in which she took the part of "William," showing herself a letter writer, "an actress of excellent pathos." The pit rose at her. The boxes had a lively demand for pocket handkerchiefs, and the actress who played the part of Susan was so carried away by her feelings that it was with difficulty she could go on with the performance. During one scene the sympathetic gallery faintly blubbered.

AN OPERA SINGER IN COURT.

Feljoita Vestvali—"the magnificent," as her admirers call her—was arrested the other day, just as she was on the point of embarking for California, and detained over to respond to the claim of her manager, Henry D. Palmer, for a four-tenths interest in her success." Palmer recites in his complaint that in her engagement for the part of Bel Demonio, Vestvali worked for one-half her costume and the net profits of the engagement. The costume cost \$3,400. The net profits were \$120. Out of this the lady received one-half the wardrobe and \$60. Of this Mr. Palmer claims four-tenths as his share, and has had Mr. Wheatleigh appointed receiver of the property.

A BROOKLYN MILLIONAIRE IN A LUNATIC ASYLUM.

Smith J. Eastman, the absconding provision speculator, has been heard of from in France, whither he was pursued by Mr. Parsons, his legal adviser. The unfortunate delinquent was found in a lunatic asylum near Lyons. No further particulars are given.

Parties here are fiercely divided on the question of the guilty intent of the absconding merchant. His friends—and he has many warm ones—maintain that it was almost an impossibility that Mr. Eastman should prove a dishonest man, and that he is the victim of circumstances which time will eventually clear up. Others, including of course all who have lost largely by his operations, pronounce him a scheming villain, for whom the State Penitentiary, instead of a lunatic asylum, should be his future retreat from the cares of the world.

It is said that a party of the friends of the delinquent have made up a purse for his defence, if it should be needed, and have sent on a request to Mr. Parsons to bring Mr. Eastman back with him.

One of our evening journals furnishes the following additional particulars:

On the day before his departure, Mr. Eastman drew the balance in bank of the firm, nearly \$100,000; and he had obtained large sums upon the hypothecation of storage receipts said to have been fraudulently issued. Mr. Eastman, it will be remembered, had a beautiful residence in Brooklyn, in which city he was a member of the church and a School Commissioner. He was also a writer. It appears he had decided to live in the south of Europe, and at Lyons made the acquaintance of Mr. Emile Crestin, to whom he represented himself as a refugee bankrupt, and he obtained the sympathy of his host. Eastman deposited with Crestin the sum of \$16,500. The latter subsequently gained the impression that Mr. Eastman's losses and the free use of opium had affected his mind, and finally he handed him over to Mr. Bernet, keeper of a lunatic asylum. The American Vice Consul at Lyons heard of Eastman through the Procureur General, who reported him insane and destitute, and the case came to the knowledge of the Minister at Paris, Mr. Bigelow, who requested that a close look out might be kept, so that the defaulter and his property might be secured. An attorney for one of the New York houses interested made a demand for the money in Mr. Crestin's hands, and it was surrendered. The attorney gives Mr. Crestin credit for honesty. It is expected that Eastman's agents may forward more money to his address and Eastman will be brought here under the extradition treaty.

THE PRISONERS AT FORTRESS MONROE.

The stories which find their way into the newspapers concerning the failing health of Jeff Davis are said to be all moonshine. This has been proved to the satisfaction of Government by official reports both from the physician at the Fort and the commandant. Hence the recent impudent request of Jeff's family physician to be allowed to visit the Fortress for the purpose of prescribing for his old patient was very properly refused. Jeff is permitted to promenade the ramparts of the fort every day at a stated hour, and the same privilege is accorded to Clement C. Clay. Recently, in consequence of a temporary change in Jeff's hours of recreation, the two rebels accidentally met face to face; but they were not allowed to stop an instant to exchange words, though in passing they managed to clasp hands. This is the first time that Davis and Clay saw each other's face since the day on which they were taken from the Clyde and brought here to their cells. In the future, the *al fresco* exercise of the prisoners will be so timed as to prevent the possibility of their seeing each other again.

HEAVY LIST OF PASSENGERS.

It was announced yesterday that over 1,600 passengers had engaged berths in today's steamer for Aspinwall, and that the company had decided to send an extra steamer out. In the number stated are included, I presume, one of the regiments whose intended departure to-day was announced a few days ago. Brig. Gen. James Sinclair will also be among the passengers on the Costa Rica, he having been assigned to duty in the Department of the Pacific. At the first battle of Bull Run Gen. Sinclair was a Lieutenant in one of our city regiments, and was subsequently appointed to a Second Lieutenantancy in the Fourteenth U. S. Infantry. During the war he was wounded five or six times, and was repeatedly breveted for conspicuous gallantry.

THE NEW COLLECTOR.

The appointment of Preston King to the

Collectorship of the port of New York seems to give great satisfaction to all parties—to the Republicans of both wings because the recipient is very generally popular with them, and to the Democracy, because they pretend to see in it evidence on the part of President Johnson of an intention of proscribing Mr. Lincoln's friends.

GEN. GRANT'S TRAVELS.

The General has reached Detroit, his tour through New England and the British Provinces having been a very rapid one. Everywhere he was received with the most enthusiastic greetings of welcome, and nowhere more cordially than among the blueroses and kanooks of the Canadas. At Bowdoin, Me., the General attended the College commencement, and contrary to his usual habit made a little speech to the people in spite of a previous declination. It happened in this wise:—Gen. Chamberlain said, "I have tried to get Gen. Grant to speak but he says 'No,' and when he says that word he means it." Grant broke in, saying, "I continue to fight it out on that line." And that was his speech. The General is in luck too, as well as his predecessors in command on the Potomac, for it is announced that the citizens of Galena have presented him with a completely furnished house in that city.

CHANG AND ENG.

The above heading will recall to the mind of many of your readers the once-noted Siamese twins, who some thirty years ago traveled through the States, exhibiting their strange partnership to the public. The firm as is well known made a small fortune in their business, upon which they retired to North Carolina and settled down on a small farm. Here they were married and had been living quite comfortably for many years until the breaking out of the rebellion which swept away all their property. They now give notice that they are about to return to the show business in order to repair their dilapidated fortunes, and that they have made arrangements to appear in public at the north some time during this month. Barium is no doubt at the bottom of this speculation.

GRIEF AMONG THE PRETTY WAITER GIRLS.

Our City Fathers have gone so far in their efforts at reform as to compel the proprietors of the pretty waiter girl concert saloons to close their dens on Sunday. This "arbitrary" movement, however, is not satisfactory to the keepers of these dens, and hence they are threatening dire consequences to the men who have been the most active in it. A meeting of the fraternity has been called, at which the proprietors intend to inaugurate measures for the protection of their inalienable rights. Possibly we may in the coming fall elections have a pure and unadulterated pretty-waiter-girl-saloon municipal ticket for the choice of the electors. Should that event happen, it would not be surprising if some of the City Fathers themselves should vote for it "on the sly."

ANOTHER FEMALE BLONDIN.

A Canadian young woman, Mlle. Josephine de Vanier, has recently been cutting high shins at a Dutch garden on Staten Island, where her daily feats of the Blondin order have created a sensation. Her exploits are performed on a rope 150 feet long, stretched at an elevation of 80 feet. Thus high in the air, Mlle. de Vanier is said to have shown herself a perfect mistress of the Blondin art, kneeling down on the rope, balancing herself on one foot and then shifting to the other, extending herself at full length and recovering her upright position with perfect ease. Josephine can do many other wondrous feats, but as those on the rope are the most daring and dangerous, they of course take the palm.

A NAVAL EXPLOIT.

The gallant Rear-Admiral Dahlgren was married in this city one evening last week, his bride being a widow, Mrs. Goddard, daughter of the late Samuel Vinton of Ohio. The lady is 30 years the junior of the admiral, and is represented to be very comely and highly accomplished. The compositor may here add the well known line, "None but the brave," etc.

INJUSTICE TO GIRLS.—Had the training of either men or women, or indeed the conduct of their lives in general, been really settled and governed by a true common sense, there would be another world than that we know of, and one in which, *inter alia*, essays on education would be unnecessary. To call the custom or rule which closes a girl's studies at seventeen "common sense," is only to evade argument by a "foregone conclusion." Those who maintain that her brains are not capable of more make just such an assumption as those who should forbid a boy learning swimming on the ground that it is impossible to swim. Those, on the other hand, who rate the girl's mental quickness so high, that by that age she will, they say, have equalled the boy four years older, appear to me to confuse the readiness of a well-cultivated mind. If a boy of seventeen is treated as a mere boy, but a girl of seventeen as an "ornament to society," she will of course exhibit a superior quickness; but this will be gained at the expense of her mental power. It is a forced flower against a natural blossoming. Besides, as before remarked, the assumption is untrue in fact. The young girl is no more really capable of mastering serious studies than her contemporary. But an additional hardship, perhaps equally injurious, has also arisen from the arbitrary limitation of the time permitted for self-improvement. She does not even start fair with the boy of her own age. If his training be broken off, he may at least have learned thoroughly what he has learned. He has obtained foundations on which he may afterwards resume his studies. But his sister's whole course of intellectual work has been crammed into the space allowed him to begin his. He has learned only the formal grammar and vocabulary, for instance, of a foreign language during the years allotted her to master the language, and some of the literature also.—She has, further, been compelled to set her mind to this arduous labor at an age when she can rarely have reached the power of heartily enjoying her studies; for she is to be out of the schoolroom during the years when she would have worked to ten-fold profit and with ten-fold ease, through growing ability to take pleasure in the work, to see in relation to present life and to other studies, and know, in a word, where it is taking her. What injustice is here! If the mind, when young, be mainly developed and improved by

experience of other and stronger minds, and if nineteen-twentieths of this experience, during youth, comes, and can come, only through sheer study and intercourse with older minds already so trained—truths which it would be out of place here to demonstrate—women have not yet had a fair chance.—Macmillan's Magazine.

ABOUT WOMEN'S DRESS.—A London paper

says—The true explanation of the prevailing extravagance in costume is, that women dress for one another. In other words, they dress for eyes which can appreciate the material and estimate the cost of every separate article they have on. It is quite true that many men care as much for and are as competent to give an opinion on the appearance of their wives, or sisters, or friends, as any number of female acquaintances; but the grounds upon which the two classes of critics will base their several judgments will always be distinct, and the conclusions themselves not infrequently quite opposite. Ask a man and a woman to tell you who is the best-dressed woman at a ball, and you will hardly ever find them agreeing in their answer. Go a step further, and compare the costumes which have been selected, and you will discover almost to a certainty that the woman has singled out the most expensive dress in the room, whereas the man has simply asked himself which is the most becoming. The one has suffered herself to be so impressed by the richness of the material, the elaborateness of the embroidery, the coarseness of the trimmings, that in the end she has found it simply impossible to leave these things out of the calculation. The other, happy in his ignorance, has looked only at the general effect, and has probably given the preference to a lady whose gown has no other merits than those of being scrupulously neat, becomingly cut, and perfectly well made. We submit, therefore, that if that deference to masculine taste which is so frequently professed really existed in any appreciable measure, it would supply an antidote to many of the grievances under which society now labors. A week or two back the correspondence of an evening contemporary was largely taken up with the sorrows of parents who have to see that their daughters look like other people, and at the same time to make both ends meet; and we have no doubt that as soon as the elections are over the columns of the Times will be thrown open to an endless repetition of similar complaints. My daughters' gowns must sweep the pavement as they walk, cries one heart-broken mother, or if they do so far consult their pockets as to loop them up, their under-skirts must be flounced and embroidered until they become as costly as the gown. There is no necessity in the case, interposes a sterner moralist; young women should have no wish to dress beyond their means merely for the sake of rivaling their richer friends. It is here that our theory comes in and harmonizes these opposing views. No man ever felt anything but irritation at seeing a woman's gown doing the business of the crossing-sweeper, or attach any value to the amount of open work displayed beneath a looped-up skirt. If young ladies would believe it—or rather if they did but attach any importance to it when they do believe it—a man will be satisfied with their appearance, so far as these considerations are concerned, if their petticoats are spotlessly clean and their stockings guileless of a wrinkle. We do not say that even these characteristics, when added to the best-fitting gowns, for which we have already stipulated, are to be attained without some expenditure of money, for cleanliness, at least in London, is not a cheap virtue, and it is not every dress-maker who knows how to make a dress. But, at any rate, the proposed standard is a good deal easier of attainment than the spurious fine-ladyism after which so many women toil in vain; and we cannot but believe that if girls did but less of vying with their own, their parents would see reason to bless the change the next time they came to look over their milliners' bills.

A MAN WITHOUT FOOD FOR THREE WEEKS

—An American named James Rush, employed by our townsman Mr. Hunt, at the Sells Mill in Southwold, left his work 19th July, for the purpose of returning to his home in the States. On the same day he arrived at and dined in Port Stanley, but finding no vessel there which answered his purpose, he took the lake shore road westward, intending to spend a few days harvesting among the farmers in the neighborhood. Before climbing the bank, being hot, he resolved to refresh himself by a bathe in the rippling waves of Lake Erie. He felt a little sick in the water, and the next thing he remembers is finding himself naked on the sandy shore, with a consciousness of having drank ravenously of water to assuage his great thirst. He was a day or two getting on his clothes—his skin was cracked on his face and other places, and filled with sand, and he was so weak that he failed many times in the arduous labor of climbing the bank. This he at last accomplished only on the 5th August, being unable to climb a fence, he made signs to two men in the field, who, fortunately for him, had come to make a bargain about some sheep. The two persons were Mr. McPherson, farmer, and Mr. Blake, butcher, Fingal. At first they took the solitary being for some wandering Indian, but after some doubts decided, as they saw him fall, that he must be drunk or injured, and then resolved to see what he was. When they came to him, imagine their horror and surprise at the sight of a living skeleton—a veritable live shadow of death! This extraordinary case is to be accounted for by the supposition that Mr. Rush, who was a stout, hearty man, had had a sunstroke and an attack of typhoid fever, during which he in some way had obtained water from the lake, the only support except his own flesh to the demands of a consuming fever for seventeen days! His legs are now, as Mr. Hunt has remarked, "like pipe stems"—but he is now being carefully tended and cared for by Mr. McPherson, whose kindness we hope, soon restore this unfortunate man to health and friends and usefulness.—Free Press.

THE BRIDGE RIVER DIGGINGS.—The

writer of the letter from Lillooet that appeared in the COLONIST of the 25th ult., requests that we will supply an inadvertent omission in his hastily compiled notes. In telling his Victoria friend not to believe all his reports from the new diggings above Lillooet, he intended to add—except the official ones.

In our yesterday's issue we mentioned the importance of the election. The result promises to be significant of all such a crisis, that a single voter might laboring in his position. Upon before many steps on every day before the public and indeed in a under another of the present duties will no doubt be still infatuated with the Hudson Bay Company's conclusions as to the return of Dr. Ash. Broun's astute representation of the Company in the likely his opinion been deemed as would indeed be to see Dr. Helm the district for a to support the Company by is employed, and are so closely personal respect House; we believe our nature, but such unbounded to feel assured that of his way to the the Hudson's injury. On the we put down Dr. represent any of Island. The col fight on this claims, and it i ment to see that to the colony's Esquimaux and responsibility of Company men can understand claims upon his services of all that would be but a man's honor chosen one of a country. They to send the best they are to pay that man let the send him unfruitful finances of either zie. If, on the o him the better n they believe his the farmer and p of the country— men, and depos Elliott. On no the sake of colo unable to judge their political pr Helmsken's peck There are oth Dr. Ash besides Company. He party in the Hou sistent every li made its appeara it is one of the creed to restrict tion of goods. In the great reformer utmost extension with private right around their sho are the veriest c only find a paral were entertained England, two or seem indeed to b who, in the con meats, have bea and seized upon idea of their me ight to see in t untutored savag blanket and daub swaggering unde hat. We can g our free port p gestures, their p the blanket and narrow mind of the free trade m the fashionable b Ash may be a l man, but if we verb we should gives us very b either. HARDLY THE many comments Speaker Helmskeny on behalf of the public had was about to be